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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4614th meeting

Monday, 23 September 2002, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Tafrov	(Bulgaria)
Members:	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1055)

Note verbale dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1056)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

02-59939 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cuba, Denmark, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Tunisia and Turkey, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Rodgriguez Parrilla (Cuba), Ms. Løj (Denmark), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Nambiar (India), Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran), Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Khalid (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) and Mr. Pamir (Turkey) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/1058 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held on Monday, 23 September 2002, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting, in accordance with the Council's provisional rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting today in response to the requests contained in a letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and Chairman of the Arab Group, document S/2002/1055, and a note verbale dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, document S/2002/1056.

Members of the Council also have before them a letter dated 19 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2002/1049) and a letter dated 20 September 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1052).

I welcome the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and I invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: Less than a week ago, the Quartet met in this building and agreed on the need for a road map to achieve a permanent settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We agreed that it was essential and urgent for the Palestinians to take all possible steps to improve security by bringing an immediate end to violence and terror. But we also agreed that it had to be done within the context of an overall plan, which must address the political,

economic, humanitarian and institutional dimensions of the problem.

We agreed that the plan must spell out reciprocal steps to be taken by the parties in each of three phases, with a Quartet mechanism to monitor and assess each party's progress against specific benchmarks, culminating in the negotiation of a final and comprehensive settlement by 2005.

We agreed, in short, on the need for a process driven both by performance and by hope. That linkage is essential, and I cannot emphasize it too strongly. Yes, we need performance. But there must be hope, too. For without hope there will be no performance.

So, far from seeing the first steps towards implementing the Quartet's vision, the events of the past few days represent a tragic step in the opposite direction. Until last week, there had been six weeks of relative calm in Israel itself, but during the same period in the occupied territory at least 54 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military operations. Then, in the space of three days, 17 to 19 September, we saw a bomb explode in a Palestinian school and two new suicide attacks perpetrated against Israeli civilians inside Israel.

I have said over and over again that such acts are morally repugnant, and I say it again today. Each time those words have to be repeated, they become even more grimly apt. These acts are to be condemned both for the utterly unjustifiable loss of life, the pain and misery that they cause to innocent people and because they set back even further the prospect of a just and lasting settlement. They strike directly at that very hope which, as the Quartet agreed, is an essential driver of political progress.

Once again, I urge all Palestinians, especially the leaders of all political factions, to renounce this wicked instrument of terror, clearly and irrevocably, now and forever.

Last week, the Quartet recognized Israel's legitimate security concerns and repeated its demand that terrorist attacks be stopped once and for all. It also repeated its call on the Palestinian Authority to work with the United States and regional partners to reform security services and combat terrorism.

But how can the Palestinians respond to that call if what is left of the civil and security infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, which is already gravely weakened, is now in the process of being destroyed? Surely, such destruction will only set back even further the prospects for implementing necessary reforms and ensuring real improvements in the Authority's security performance.

Similarly, the continuing destruction of the capacity of ministries and municipalities to provide basic services such as water, electricity and education will hamper and even undermine efforts to meet humanitarian needs, whether by Palestinian or by international organizations. Further misery is hardly a basis for progress, whether political, security or economic.

The Quartet and our Arab partners in the region are working intensively with the Palestinian Authority to see that security and institutional reforms are implemented. But we can succeed only if the Government of Israel actively supports the process rather than hindering it. The systematic and literal grinding down of the Authority's headquarters in Ramallah, in which a further 10 Palestinians have been killed, is also likely to cause greater political instability in the West Bank and Gaza. Despite the re-imposition of curfews in most West Bank towns, it has already prompted mass demonstrations in a number of Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, and efforts to address key reform issues have been postponed as a result.

This too will set back the prospects for resuming the peace process. Once again, I appeal to Israel to take greater care to protect the lives of Palestinian civilians and to refrain from policies and actions that are in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

My Special Envoy is in constant contact with both parties and has repeatedly spoken to Chairman Arafat and other senior Palestinian officials in Ramallah. He met this morning with Foreign Minister Peres and is now in Ramallah with the Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Abu Mazen. He is working in close coordination with the other members of the Quartet and key actors in the region.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not going to be resolved by military might alone, or by violent means of any kind. A policy based on forcing the other side to capitulate is a bankrupt policy. It is not working, and it will never work. It only encourages desperation. It weakens moderates and strengthens extremists. In the

end there will have to be a political settlement, negotiated between the two peoples on an equal basis — a settlement in which, as this Council has said, two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

Why not reach that end sooner rather than later? How many hundreds or thousands more have to die, how much more pain and misery must be endured before leaders on both sides find the vision and the courage to accept the inevitable?

Only a settlement on that basis can bring real peace and security to both peoples, and only a comprehensive approach can bring a settlement on that basis nearer.

The so-called sequential approach, which insists on full security as a precondition for progress on the political, humanitarian and institutional fronts, has clearly failed. Israel needs to understand that there will be no lasting security without a political settlement. And therefore, even while defending itself against terrorist attacks, Israel should cooperate actively with the Quartet's efforts to reach such a settlement within the next three years.

The Palestinians, on their side, need to understand that there will be no settlement without lasting security for Israel.

Both sides must be urged by all who have any influence over them to accept and act on those understandings so that at last there can be peace and security for both peoples, as part of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

But I fear this vision will remain a distant mirage so long as our television screens — and the minds of all those involved — are filled with ugly scenes of death and destruction, whether in the streets of Tel Aviv or at the *Muqata'a* in Ramallah.

More than 80 years ago, the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats wrote of a time in his country when

> "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world ...
>
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are full of passionate intensity."

Alas, those words have been true of many times and many places since, and they seem all too true of the situation between Israelis and Palestinians today.

But let us not resign ourselves to that state of affairs. Let us help the best on both sides, Palestinian and Israeli, to regain their passion for peace and the conviction that brought them so close to agreement two years ago.

Let us resist the downward spiral into anarchy. Let us rebuild a centre that can hold.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his participation in the work of the Council today and for his statement.

The next speaker is the Permanent Observer of Palestine. I now call on him to take the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the current month. I also thank your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, for his stewardship of the Council last month. In addition, I should like to join you in welcoming the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and I thank him for his tireless efforts to bring about peace in the region. We urge him to pursue those efforts, including his work with the Quartet.

Last Thursday, 19 September 2002, Israel, the occupying Power, sent its forces and tanks to reoccupy the compound of President Yasser Arafat in the city of Ramallah. The forces of occupation razed some buildings within the compound and blew up others, digging a trench around the only remaining and now damaged building, in which President Arafat and other officials and security officers remained. Israeli forces also built a barbed wire fence around that building. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupying forces opened fire on the area, resulting in at least one death and an unknown number of injuries and, of course, directly threatening the lives of President Arafat and those with him. The explosions, the razing and other forms of threat and coercion have continued for days.

Those grave and illegal criminal acts, which are yet another assault on the entire Palestinian people, were accompanied by announcements from Israeli officials that the Palestinian President would be deported from Palestinian territory and that he would be harmed, along with other statements concerning the

wish of Israel, the occupying Power, to arrest a number of the officials who remained with the President. Needless to say, those announcements are absolutely unacceptable, as they represent an escalation of the aggression and an attempt to further humiliate our leadership and our officials. Israel's repetition of such lies will amount to an encouragement of aggression.

After those events, the population of Ramallah and of many other Palestinian cities defied the curfew imposed upon them and took to the streets to express their rejection of the new Israeli criminal aggression. The reaction of the Israeli occupying forces was typical: they fired directly on the demonstrators, resulting in the martyrdom of five civilians and the injury of scores of others.

Clearly, there is no limit to the crimes committed by Mr. Sharon, by his Government and by his army in the series of war crimes and acts of State terrorism committed against the Palestinian people. Unfortunately, it is all being carried out with total impunity while the international community, represented by the Security Council, fails to fulfil its obligations because of the position of a permanent Council member.

Despite everything, we officially call on the Council to adopt a clear resolution demanding that Israel withdraw immediately from the headquarters of President Arafat, in addition to whatever other action the Council might deem appropriate in order to put an end to the humanitarian crisis being endured by our people and to the tragic confrontation between the two sides. It is not too late to do that, despite the regrettable and unwarranted delay of this Council meeting from last Friday until today. I express that position not only in my national capacity, but also as this month's Chairman of the Arab Group, which had requested an immediate Council meeting to consider this grave situation.

Throughout the years, the Palestinian people have been subjected to uprooting, displacement, denial of their existence, destruction, murder and confiscation of their land and property. They have been the target of massacres, from those at Deir Yassin and Kafr Qassem to that at the Jenin refugee camp. During the past two years in particular, since Mr. Sharon assumed power, Israel, the occupying Power, has not stopped its extrajudicial executions, its collective punishments such as home demolitions, the deliberate murder of civilians and the infliction of maximum injury, continuing its abductions and arrests and causing widespread, deliberate destruction to property and farmland. Israel has continued to severely restrict the movement of persons and goods, including those of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations, imposing closures and, most recently, imposing a curfew on hundred of thousands of people.

In brief, Israel, the occupying Power — even during periods of calm on the Palestinian side, including over the past six weeks — has continued to destroy the Palestinian Authority and its institutions and to destroy the entire life of the Palestinian people. Israel has reoccupied the areas under Palestinian control, as if to return the situation to what it had been before the peace process.

The political objectives of the Israeli side, in particular those of Mr. Sharon, are very clear: to destroy the Palestinian Authority and to break up the Palestinian leadership in order to create a situation of vacuum and anarchy with a view to subjugating the entire Palestinian population.

Its purpose is not only to prevent permanent settlement that would ensure Israel's withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory, but to ensure the continuation of occupation and colonial settlement. In fact, Mr. Sharon, and unfortunately some of his supporters, do not want a different Palestinian leadership, but total absence of any leadership. He does not want a solution with the Palestinian people, but wants to force it to abandon its rights.

What I have just said is not an analysis. Mr. Sharon has been very clear in his public statements for those who want to listen and understand. Mr. Sharon has repeatedly said that he rejects any final settlement and that he wants long-term interim arrangements. Mr. Sharon has repeatedly said that Palestinians had to be harmed and totally defeated. He objected to the Mitchell recommendations until he managed to bury them. Mr. Sharon said that he had hoped to have killed President Arafat in Beirut. Mr. Sharon rewrote resolution 242 (1967) in open defiance of the Security Council and all those who supported the peace process, and he was categorically clear when he recently said that the Oslo Accords no longer exist. This is the very same Mr. Sharon who is the hero of the massacres of Sabra and Shatila, Qibya and Khan Yunis. He is the person responsible for all

kinds of war crimes and State-sponsored terrorism committed by the Israeli occupation forces during his premiership of the Israeli Government. He is the person who is pushing the entire region towards catastrophe.

For its part, Israel is trying to deny these political objectives and is waging psychological warfare against our people and leadership, in addition to a systematic global campaign of falsehoods and misleading lies. One major component of this is an attempt by Israel to project that all of the atrocities committed against our people are a reaction against suicide bombings, projecting the entire conflict as having started with all these explosions. Nothing could be further from the truth.

For our part, our position has been clear. We condemn these bombings against civilians in Israel. We condemn them as acts of terrorism that are harmful to the Palestinian national interests. In any case they are being committed by groups that oppose the peace process and the accords signed between the two sides. However, I would like to state here that the first suicide bombings took place towards the end of 1994. That is 27 years after the gruesome Israeli occupation began, and after Israel, the occupying Power, had already transferred about 350,000 Israeli settlers to occupy Palestinian land in order to settle there, colonize it and take it over.

No, the Israeli occupation and its reprehensible practices have not resulted from the suicide bombings — it actually created them. When the Israeli political position favoured the continuation of the peace process and efforts to achieve a final solution, those acts were not allowed to derail the peace process but rather were used to strengthen cooperation with the Palestinian Authority.

When the political position became Sharon's political position, the peace process was halted and the suicide bombings were used as a pretext to hit the Palestinian Authority and to revert to the pre-Oslo situation.

Why is the Palestinian Authority being targeted instead of assaulting the perpetrators of the suicide bombings? Why are the lives of the entire Palestinian people being destroyed instead of convincing them that there is a viable path to peace to fulfil their rights. Even if we accept the Israeli version of the story, how can a State be allowed to prevent attacks against its own civilians through ferocious and destructive attacks against an entire other population?

If Mr. Sharon wanted a solution, he should have known by this time that there was no military solution. He is pursuing a military solution through suppression and brutality, because he does not want a political solution.

If we examine all of Israel's actions in the context of international law and Security Council resolutions, we find a clear case. It is a case of three decades of defiance of Security Council resolutions. Three decades and more. Twenty-eight resolutions have been adopted by the Council with regard to Israeli practices and measures in our occupied territory. All were rejected by the occupying Power; it did not comply with even one of them. These include resolutions on Israeli violations and breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; resolutions on illegal Israeli measures in Jerusalem; resolutions on the settlements; resolutions on deportations; resolutions on providing protection to the Palestinian civilians; and resolutions on dispatching envoys and fact-finding missions. All have been rejected and, in fact, defied through continued Israeli occupation.

Israel is the only State in the world that is officially recognized as an occupying Power by the Security Council. Israel is the only State engaged in settlement colonialism in the post-colonization era. It is the only State that has systematically violated and breached provisions of international law and international humanitarian law. It is the only country in the world that has openly rejected all relevant Security Council resolutions. As if that is not enough, Israel is the only State in the region that has illegally acquired nuclear weapons, in addition to other weapons of mass destruction. What has the Security Council done? Unfortunately, not much. What does the Council intend to do now? We hope that the Council will show the necessary seriousness in shouldering its responsibilities towards the implementation of its own resolutions.

Another classic component of Israeli campaigns is the attempt to divert attention to issues other than the main issue at hand and to shift the onus onto the Palestinian side. We see this clearly in focusing on the question of reform. It is true that this is a very important issue for us, but it remains a Palestinian matter and is not part of the international agenda that deals with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Unfortunately, some appear to want to implement Mr. Sharon's plans through this approach. They are trying to give democracy a new meaning that does not recognize free elections and are trying to impose a political system, even an electoral system, on our people. This crude intervention in the affairs of our people is unacceptable. In any case, this issue cannot substitute for addressing the main issue — namely, the continuation of the Israeli occupation and the need to end this occupation.

Yes, we will proceed with our second round of national elections, and we will do our best to rebuild our institutions and reform them. We welcome any international assistance in this regard. But at the same time, we understand the limitations of this process, and we know that no true, full democracy can exist under foreign occupation, and we know that we cannot build and maintain stable and effective institutions while killing, destruction and aggression continue.

Demanding that the Palestinian side fulfil its duties in the area of security following the destruction of its security apparatus, expecting it to complete reforms and establish true democracy while under occupation and continued oppression is ludicrous and impossible to achieve. Either intentionally or unintentionally, this for all practical purposes provides a new cover for Mr. Sharon and his policies, while blaming the Palestinian side for failure.

All this is happening while the peace process is being marginalized and extremist forces are rising. This hysteria must come to and end and the moment of truth must be faced, namely the truth of Mr. Sharon, his Government, his army and their policies. Otherwise, we are drifting to a course that will drag the entire region into a worse situation.

The only viable way to end the current tragedy and to return to the peace track is to pursue a comprehensive approach along with an effective international presence on the ground. What is meant by a comprehensive approach is not only how to deal with political, economic and security dimensions all at once, although these are important; but also to have a prior declaration of the form of the final settlement, not only on the basis of two States — Israel and Palestine — but also by identifying the borders between the two States, with the possibility of the two sides agreeing to some specific amendments thereto.

This border is, of course, the armistice line that is now commonly known as the 1967 border. On this basis, there would be specific stages and steps that would lead us from here to our final destination, the final settlement. This is the only approach that would create a different dynamic on the two sides and inevitably lead to support by the overwhelming majority of both sides for this settlement.

This approach also requires a genuine and effective international presence on the ground. This could be in the form of official observers in sufficient numbers and having a clear mandate, or, even better, in the form that was proposed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan: the establishment of a multinational force under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The parameters of the final settlement are widely known, and our direct experience has taught us that the only possible and available way to achieve peace is that just described. What, then, is the obstacle to this settlement? I do not want to get into that from my official position of responsibility, because, like every Palestinian, I am angry and furious at everything that is happening in our country and in our region. But we, the Palestinian people, have not lost hope, and we await your measures.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for the congratulations that he extended to me.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency for this month and to extend my congratulations to Ambassador John Negroponte on the outstanding manner in which he guided the deliberations of the Council last month. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his permanent contribution and concerted efforts to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to anchor peaceful coexistence in the Middle East.

The Security Council is meeting just days after a Palestinian suicide bomber turned an ordinary Tel Aviv street into a scene of horrific carnage. As workers and shoppers were going about their business, a Palestinian terrorist boarded a public city bus and detonated a powerful explosive charge that ripped through the crowded downtown district. When the dust settled, five Israeli civilians lay dead and more than sixty others were wounded, several of them seriously.

The Tel Aviv bombing followed a day of hell in which three Israelis were killed and three wounded in three separate incidents. Early in the morning, security forces discovered the charred body of David Buhbut. Buhbut, who was reported missing on Tuesday night, had gone shopping in an Arab village near his home. He was abducted and tortured for several hours, and his body was discarded in a dumpster where it was later found.

In the afternoon, Palestinian terrorists shot and killed Yosef Ajami, an Israeli civilian who was driving his car to Baka al-Gharbiya. And in the evening, Israeli policeman Moshe Hizkiyahu was killed as he responded to a report of a suspicious individual near the Umm el-Fahm Junction. As Officer Hizkiyahu approached, the man blew himself up. Two others were wounded in the attack, for which Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

These attacks come after a six-week period of relative quiet resulting from the extraordinary efforts of Israeli security forces. In recent weeks, Israeli forces have intercepted or thwarted scores of attempted attacks, including one in which a truck filled with hundreds of kilograms of explosives was seized, more than enough to bring a skyscraper crashing to the ground.

During this same period there have been some encouraging signs of internal Palestinian dialogue, including the voices of those who are beginning to question the value of the Palestinian campaign of terrorism and suicide bombings. Israel is following these discussions with great interest, and we are cautiously optimistic that they may signal a new direction for the Palestinian people.

As a result of this period of quiet, and out of genuine concern for the plight of the Palestinian population, Israel had begun to scale back some of the security precautions it had implemented. Various steps were taken to ease the freedom of movement of Palestinians, particularly the suspension of curfews.

It is no coincidence that terrorist attacks have resumed at precisely the moment that Israel has relaxed some of its security precautions. Steps that were taken to improve the humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian population have been cynically viewed by terrorists as opportunities. Any relaxation in Israeli security policy is seized upon, and in the past few days we have all witnessed the catastrophic result. This is the clearest affirmation of what we have constantly asserted: that the only thing which stands between Palestinian terrorists and their Israeli victims is the preventive actions of the Israeli military.

These attacks have also affirmed the terrorists' violent rejection of any efforts at reconciliation between the parties, as they come amidst resurgent efforts of responsible parties to help stop the violence and bring the parties back to the negotiating table. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defence Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer have met a number of times with Palestinian officials and the meetings appeared promising. The Quartet met in New York in still another effort to revive the peace process. And yet, with every hopeful step forward, terrorism forces us to take an even greater step backward.

As Foreign Minister Peres observed in his recent speech before the General Assembly, despite the complexity of the conflicts in the Middle East, if it were not for terror we could have already resolved them. Terror, however, does not solve conflicts, it entrenches them.

Time and again Palestinian terrorist groups have shown their eagerness to scuttle any attempts to energize the peace process and restore hope to the people of the region. If the Palestinian leadership is unwilling to confront these demonstrated enemies of peace, then it undermines its claim to be a partner for peace.

The responsibility of the Palestinian leadership is clear. It must act decisively and resolutely to combat Palestinian terrorism. It must end the financial, logistical and moral support it has provided to terrorist organizations. It must dismantle the infrastructure upon which Palestinian terrorists depend. It must confiscate their weapons, arrest their leaders, shut down their offices and cut off their sources of funding. It must end the relentless incitement to violence in the official Palestinian Authority-controlled media. It must stop the glorification of violence and martyrdom in Palestinian schools. It must stop hanging portraits of terrorists from buildings, naming streets after them and holding them up as role models for other Palestinians to follow. In short, it must completely de-legitimize terrorism and suicide bombing in the eyes of its people. Every one of these obligations stem from specific Security Council resolutions, signed commitments and

the requirements of international law, which the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly flouted.

Instead of respecting its legal obligations, the Palestinian leadership, even to this day, continues to harbour terrorists and refuses to arrest them and bring them to justice. Inside the leadership compound in Ramallah are 50 individuals who have planned, funded and orchestrated scores of terrorist attacks and who are responsible for countless deaths of innocent civilians. Rather than take action against those it knows are complicit in acts of terrorism, the Palestinian Authority grants them immunity within its headquarters and protects them.

The Palestinian leadership must establish itself as the only party with the authority to exercise the use of force. It can no longer tolerate the existence of numerous armed groups, each with its own agenda, methods and doctrine, acting independently of one another. The monopoly of the use of force is one of the most basic responsibilities of national leadership. A leadership that fails to exercise that responsibility has also lost its legitimate right to lead.

These steps, which are expected by the international community, are more than within the power of the Palestinian leadership to undertake. That it has utterly refused to do so, even after more than two years of hostilities, is a most telling indication of the status of its commitment to ending violence and returning to a political process.

The only enduring solution to the conflict in the region is the one articulated by President Bush and endorsed by the Council, one in which two States live side by side in peace, security and coexistence. The Foreign Minister of Israel, addressing the General Assembly just a few days ago, again expressed Israel's enduring commitment to that vision.

Additional Security Council resolutions, particularly one-sided ones, are more than unhelpful; they are counterproductive. Resolutions that fail to address the context of terrorism, specifically demand the dismantling of terrorist organizations such as Islamic Jihad, Hamas and the Fatah Al-Aqsa Brigades and condemn suicide bombing in the strongest possible terms are simply a further incentive for the continuation of the Palestinian terrorist campaign. If international support can be garnered for one-sided resolutions, why should compromise be sought at the negotiating table?

As we know from history, achieving a vision of two States living in peace and security depends not on entertaining partisan initiatives, but on genuine and meaningful dialogue. But if violence and terror continue, it will be impossible to arrive at a political settlement.

Ending the terror, incitement and hatred, and engaging in genuine face-to-face negotiations, in a spirit of good faith and partnership, is the only way we can achieve the vision the Council has endorsed and pave the way for a brighter future for all the peoples of the region.

I would like to conclude by drawing the Council's attention to a story that I believe should serve not only as an inspiration, but also as a reminder that, even in the face of the devastating reality Palestinians and Israelis face each day, there remains among the peoples of this troubled region the basic need for coexistence.

Jonathan Jesner was a teenage student who was among those killed in Tel Aviv on Thursday. The Jesner family donated his kidney to a 7-year-old Palestinian girl, Yasmin Abu Ramila, who was suffering from a debilitating disease. This act provided her with a life-saving transplant.

In the past, the families of Palestinians who have lost their lives in the conflict with Israel have made similarly life-affirming and courageous gestures, donating their organs to Israelis suffering from illness and disease. These contributions are the very antithesis of terror. They provide a glimmer of hope that, despite the bitterness, death and mourning, we can still recognize common humanity and common destiny.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): Last Friday morning, the Security Council members gathered in this Chamber for a briefing by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to brief us on the recent meeting of the Quartet at United Nations Headquarters last week. Members of the Council expressed their support for the statement issued by the Quartet on 17 September 2002. That statement described some of the concrete, practical and forward-looking steps Quartet members, including United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov, European Union High Representative Solana and Secretary of State Powell, are taking with the parties to end violence and to advance political negotiations aimed at realizing President Bush's vision of two States, Israel and an

independent, viable and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The parties and key regional Arab States also participated in the Quartet meetings, which contributed to restoring confidence and trust in the Middle East. The Quartet meeting coincided with what appeared to be a terrorist bombing at a Palestinian school near Hebron that wounded five Palestinian children. The Quartet deplored and condemned morally repugnant violence and terror.

Palestinian extremists reacted immediately to the Quartet's efforts with more devastating acts of terror: Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad competed in their claims of responsibility for two suicide bombing attacks in Israel on 18 and 19 September 2002. The second, in Tel Aviv, killed six Israelis and one Scottish national on a civilian bus. Sixty people were injured, many of whom were mutilated by the blast. Nearly all Security Council members condemned these attacks publicly, and privately within the Security Council consultations room. Most of the Governments represented in this Chamber have also made timely statements condemning these attacks and the groups that continue to perpetrate them. We encourage others to join us in condemning these acts of terror in the strongest possible terms.

The United States is intensively engaged in efforts to calm the situation in the Middle East. Israel's recent actions in the Ramallah Muqata'a are not helpful, either in achieving a lasting end to violence or in promoting vital reforms. The United States has made this clear at the highest levels of the Israeli Government. It is essential that Israel consider carefully the consequences of its actions and avoid further measures that escalate rather than reduce tension and violence. The further destruction by Israel of the Palestinian Authority's remaining civilian and security infrastructure will not improve Israel's security situation; on the contrary, it will only set back further the prospects for implementing the reforms necessary to ensure real improvements in the Palestinian Authority's security performance. It is also likely to have serious negative consequences for political stability in the West Bank and Gaza, and therefore for the prospects of resuming the political process.

The United States objectives are clear: ending terrorism, promoting Palestinian civil reform, restoring active security cooperation, alleviating the humanitarian situation inside Palestinian areas and working towards a resumption of a political dialogue that leads to a lasting peace. Progress on these objectives is critical to restoring trust and confidence between the two sides. A common front, exemplified by the Quartet and those that support its efforts, can make a real difference in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I call on all members of the international community to support and encourage steps on the ground that will contribute concretely and objectively to meeting these objectives.

We will not support the adoption of a one-sided text that fails to recognize that this conflict has two sides, that fails to condemn acts of terror and the groups that perpetrate them and that fails to call for the dismantling of the networks that threaten all the people of the Middle East, both Arab and Israeli.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): After six weeks, innocent Israelis again became the victims of terrorist acts. Terrorism builds nothing, destroys everything and must be fought vigorously. Terrorism works against the interests of the Palestinian people. President Arafat and the Palestinian Authority must do everything they can to stop Palestinian terrorism and eliminate terrorist structures. Those responsible must be brought to justice.

During the same period, dozens of Palestinians have been killed by Israeli military action, among them many innocent civilians. Norway has appealed to Israel to stop the ongoing military operation against the headquarters of President Arafat. We do not think that the military actions against him will stop terrorism; nor do we think that they will further Israel's long-term security needs.

Norway supports the conclusions of the Quartet meeting held on 17 September. We support the work done to formulate a road map that can identify a way out of the present crisis. Security for both Israelis and Palestinians has to be restored. But equally important is the need to restore the political dialogue. The Middle East conflict cannot be solved through the use of arms. The solution has to be political.

Norway fully supports the Palestinian reform process. It is now more important than ever to create an accountable and efficient Palestinian Authority. Progress has been made despite the very difficult circumstances in which the reform efforts are being carried out.

However, reforms cannot be implemented in a vacuum. The present security situation undermines the reform efforts. The renewed attacks on President Arafat's compound have jeopardized these efforts. The success of the reforms also depends on Palestinians seeing improvements both in living conditions and in political prospects. The Palestinians must be given hope. Norway therefore urges Israel to stop actions that undermine the Palestinian reform efforts and to assist in creating an environment that is conducive to supporting the reform efforts.

Norway is deeply alarmed by the deteriorating humanitarian situation of the Palestinians. We were pleased to hear high-level assurances from Israel of increased cooperation with humanitarian agencies, but we have to note that officials of those agencies are reporting only marginal improvements on the ground. Norway recognizes Israel's legitimate security needs, but the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population must also be safeguarded.

The humanitarian plight of the Palestinian people is now quickly deteriorating. The curfews continue to confine to their homes, on average, almost half a million Palestinians in more than 20 cities and towns, sometimes for days at a time. The business sector is paralysed. Malnutrition among children is increasing to unacceptable levels, and unemployment rates are above 50 per cent. Norway therefore supports the recommendation of the Bertini report to dispatch a mission to develop a detailed plan on how to deal with humanitarian needs. Norway urges Israel to fully cooperate with aid agencies and to lift the harsh restrictions imposed on the Palestinians. The humanitarian situation should continue to be followed closely by the international community. We therefore welcome the decision by the Quartet to hold a ministerial meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in December, in parallel with the holding of a new Quartet meeting.

The present situation is deeply tragic for all those who wish for peace and who are held hostage by extremist and brutal action. Norway urges maximum restraint and calls upon the parties to allow the Quartet to continue to work out a road map that can bring about new positive momentum in the efforts to establish security, peace and a lasting political solution.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully endorses the statement to be made shortly by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union.

The situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories has tragically deteriorated in recent days. Given the responsibilities conferred upon the Security Council by the Charter, the gravity of the situation fully justifies the Council's meeting today to hear the views of the parties and to carefully review the situation and respond to it accordingly.

Renewed hopes of returning to the path of dialogue and peace negotiations have been dashed by the recent terrorist attacks against Israel in Jerusalem and in Tel Aviv, which have claimed many innocent victims, as well as by the terrorist act last week that deliberately targeted Palestinian schoolchildren in Hebron. France condemned in the strongest possible terms these heinous and unjustifiable acts. They discredit the cause they claim to serve. I reiterate here in the Council France's solidarity with and condolences to the families of the victims of these barbaric acts.

Hope was destroyed also by those who, blindly or deliberately, were unable, or did not wish, to put to good use the relative calm that had prevailed for almost six weeks. By continuing its military operations during that period — when no attacks took place against civilians in Israel — and in so doing killing many Palestinian civilians, the Israeli army played right into the hands of the most extremist Palestinian factions.

Ongoing military operations aimed at the offices of the President of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah are unacceptable. France demands that they cease immediately, and it has said so to the Israeli authorities. Meeting violence with more violence, laying siege to the Palestinian Authority and destroying its infrastructures can in no way contribute to the fight against terrorism or to meeting Israel's legitimate security concerns. Rather, these acts further impede the Authority's ability to combat the terrorist scourge. They prevent the implementation of the reforms entered into with the unanimous support of the international community and which are essential to establishing a new partnership for peace. Reforms must be encouraged, not slowed down. The current operation against the Palestinian presidency can only delay them.

It is, of course, essential that the Palestinian Authority use every means at its disposal to prevent terrorists from acting and to arrest and bring to justice the perpetrators of, and masterminds behind, terrorist

acts, and punish them as severely as possible. France's message in this regard is unambiguous.

It is equally essential that Israel realize that the security imperative — which is entirely legitimate — cannot serve as its only strategy. I would echo the words of the Secretary-General, as well as the statement made by his Special Envoy to the Council last Friday, in saying that the approach taken, which is based on security alone — the so-called sequential approach — has failed. We must rekindle hope. This will require not only an improvement in the security situation but also a commitment to, and the implementation of, parallel progress in other areas and in the political area in particular.

From this perspective, the most recent meeting of the Quartet made it possible to chart a course towards the resumption of the peace process. France, like many other countries, welcomed this positive development. The general framework for a three-phase plan leading to the settlement of the conflict has been defined. The framework sets out the stages of the plan and the measures that are expected of the parties as well as a timetable for their implementation. It gives the Quartet a key monitoring role.

In the current context of mutual defiance between the parties, we deem essential the creation of a third-party mechanism to assess and monitor the implementation by each party of the measures expected of it. The early holding of an international conference could also make a useful contribution to defining parameters as well as the role of each party, thereby enhancing the chances of success of future peace negotiations.

The course set by the Quartet must be maintained and its various elements further defined. The members of the Quartet are committed to doing so, and they will continue to work towards that end in the coming weeks. But it is the parties themselves which must demonstrate in the field, above and beyond words and professions of faith, their dedication to the goals set by the international community. This will require, among other things, implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, all of which are equally binding, in their entirety, upon all parties.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): Let me first make very clear the strength of the United Kingdom condemnation of all terrorist attacks. We deeply regret the loss of life and extend our sympathies to the families of the recent victims, which on this occasion included a 19-year-old British national, Jonathan Jesner, to whom the Permanent Representative of Israel referred just now. There can be no valid excuse for the indiscriminate and deliberate taking of civilian lives, of any nationality, under whatever circumstances.

Both Palestinians and Israelis must take action to break the cycle of violence and to help the other party to do likewise. We should be clear that such attacks are aimed at the search for peace itself. We should not let rejectionists succeed in derailing what progress has been achieved and what we want to achieve in the future. If the logic of peace were the priority, the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority would be working together to deal with the threat to the peace which they both claim to seek.

We are seriously concerned by the worsening humanitarian situation. The desperation of the Palestinian population fuels the extremists and stifles hopes of a political process. While the Palestinian Authority needs to take concrete steps against terrorists, Israel should do more to ease restrictions on Palestinians and to enable economic life to recover and the humanitarian situation to improve. We are working with others to help alleviate the suffering and to agree a long-term resolution to this crisis.

The United Kingdom's diplomacy in all its forms is aimed at achieving an end to the violence and at restoring the political process. But we have learnt by now that the international community cannot impose peace. We are all now close to disgust that the parties continue to fail to appreciate that there can be no military solution. Only a return to the negotiating table will provide the peaceful solution which we are convinced both peoples want and deserve.

Israel has a right to exist in security. It is entitled to take steps to protect itself from terrorist attack, but these should be neither disproportionate nor excessive. Deployment of Israeli tanks in Ramallah and Gaza, and further destruction of President Arafat's compound, are not the answer. The blockade is unjustified and should end. Not only is it counterproductive for the search for long-term security for Israel; it also flies in the face of the Security Council's sensible and widely supported prescriptions for eventual peace, most recently expressed in resolution 1397 (2002).

The Palestinians have a right to establish a sovereign, viable and independent Palestinian State. The Palestinian Authority must do all in its power to prevent terrorist attacks. We welcome its condemnation of the latest bombings and recent pleas to the Palestinian population to renounce violence. We stand ready to help it rebuild and reform itself so that it can regain the confidence of the international community in its work to clamp down on violence.

The Quartet set out on 17 September its commitment to a concrete three-phase implementation road map. It did this after consultation with Israel, the Palestinian Authority and representatives of the Arab League follow-up committee. We fully support the Quartet in its efforts because they represent the hope of which the Secretary-General spoke so eloquently to us this morning. Our focus now should be on agreement to a detailed road map and its implementation. Bad decisions and extremist action are standing in the way.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): Ireland is fully associated with the statement that will be made later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union.

At a time when prospects for political progress in the Middle East appeared on the increase and when the international community has been actively engaged in nurturing these tentative hopes, the events of recent days — suicide bombings that have again taken Israeli lives, a terrorist attack on Palestinian schoolchildren and the attack on President Arafat's compound in Ramallah — have come as a bitter disappointment.

The Secretary-General recalled earlier that only last Tuesday, the Quartet, here in New York, committed itself to the early completion of a road map that would guide the parties to a settlement that would secure the legitimate rights of both parties. Israel would gain full recognition by its neighbours and guarantees of its national security, and the Palestinian people would see an end to occupation and the realization of their right to sovereignty.

Such a road map would be the beginning of a process, not its conclusion, but it offers a real hope for progress towards the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and towards realizing the vision enshrined in the declaration of the Beirut Arab Summit, in statements by world leaders, including President Bush, and in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002).

We have seen in recent months a strong and encouraging movement towards reform in Palestinian political life. This movement holds great promise for the establishment of a democratic and accountable Government in a future Palestine. The demand for this movement arose from within Palestinian society itself, and it has attracted the deserved support of the international community.

We have seen a gathering consensus in large parts of Palestinian society and political life against terrorism, not only as a self-defeating tactic but as wrong in itself and as a danger to prospects for the early achievement of a Palestinian State and a region truly at peace.

We have seen over recent weeks a clear lull in terrorist actions and tentative moves towards a broad ceasefire. If such a ceasefire had been allowed to take root, it would have done more for the security of Israel and Israelis and for the security of Palestinians than any number of security measures, closures, curfews, security structures or withdrawals. Further suicide bombings, attempted suicide bombings and the reaction by Israeli forces against President Arafat's headquarters have dealt those hopes a severe blow.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland deplored the despicable attacks against Israeli civilians, saying that they were clearly intended to wreck progress towards restoring the peace process. Mr. Cowen pointed out that those attacks had been carried out against the express wishes of the Palestinian Authority and despite its efforts to prevent such attacks. They came after a period of six weeks during which there were no Israeli civilian casualties inside Israel, while, as we heard from Special Coordinator Roed-Larsen last Friday, more than 50 Palestinians, mostly innocent people — men, women and children — died in Israeli military operations, including extrajudicial killings

The actions of the Israeli armed forces in Ramallah in the past three days have also dealt hopes for peace a severe blow. The almost complete destruction of the centre and symbol of Palestinian national life can only convey the message that the Israeli Government is not interested in any renewal of Palestinian political life that comes from within Palestinian society but is intent on imposing its own terms on any such renewal.

My Foreign Minister has called on Israel to withdraw its forces from President Arafat's headquarters and to exercise the greatest restraint. He said that terrorist attacks on innocent Israeli civilians, for which there can be no justification, must not be allowed to provoke a reaction that in turn causes civilian casualties and is totally counterproductive and damages the prospects for resolving the conflict. Ireland considers that these actions by the Israeli security forces are completely unacceptable. They must end immediately.

Ms. Catherine Bertini's recent report on the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories and the latest socio-economic report by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Terroritories paint a truly grim picture. The Palestinian economy has, according to Ms. Bertini, by and large collapsed. Most of the Palestinian population is now living at levels of severe poverty, with increasing malnutrition and serious interruptions in children's education.

The international community also has a responsibility to act to redress the situation, and Ireland looks forward to the detailed plan that United Nations agencies will submit to the ministerial-level meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in December. Above all, however, Israel itself has a clear responsibility to address immediately, in a manner consistent with its security, the effects of its closures and curfews. The impact of Israeli measures has had severe consequences for the daily lives of Palestinians. And this is no small point. Hope abandoned is no basis for a lasting peace. And the presence of hope is surely an indispensable basis for building the peace that both peoples want and deserve.

Israel also has a responsibility to halt the process of settlement expansion and consolidation, which undermines hope among Palestinians that Israel will ever agree to a sovereign Palestine.

Grievance, bitterness, insecurity, victimhood, manifest injustice: these are the great enemies of achieving peace in the Middle East. Israel wants and deserves the security and peace its people need. Palestinians want and deserve a sense of hope, a sense of belonging and a home that is fully theirs and that will allow Palestine and its people an honourable place in the world.

And we here in the Security Council must meet our responsibility in helping to achieve these goals.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): First, Mr. President, I would like to thank you sincerely for agreeing to the Arab Group's request for this public meeting because of the renewed violence in the Middle East and the extremely grave situation in Ramallah. The delegation of Cameroon is deeply concerned. We would like to reaffirm the need to respect the physical integrity and the political survival of Palestinian institutions. Two sides are needed to build peace and to have dialogue.

Three days ago, I unambiguously condemned the escalation of violence and the recent attacks in the Middle East. Today, given the tragic and terrifying increase in bloodshed, there is a serious danger that we and our peoples will be overwhelmed by despair. It seems that the chance for peace is yet again drifting further and further away and that the region may yet again be caught up in madness and confrontation. Despite all this, however, we have to hope, for, as the Secretary-General just said, we need hope. His words sound even more tragic today.

Just three days ago, Cameroon was hopeful about the peace plan offered by the Quartet, which takes the Council's concerns and the requirements for a lasting settlement into account. It seemed to us then, as it seems to us today, to be capable of restoring peace to Palestine, the land of peace. At that time, Cameroon drew attention to the difficulties that would inevitably arise. More specifically, I called on the sides to adhere fully to the peace plan prepared by the Quartet. We insisted that neither party, on the basis of some contingency or other, should be able to call the plan into question.

Unfortunately, this was at a time of relative calm that had lasted several weeks. Now, just when real hope seemed to be emerging, further violence is jeopardizing the new momentum. I would recall Tolstoy's words to the effect that no reform imposed by violence will set the wrong to rights. Wisdom has no need of violence.

Thus, I call on the parties once again to respect human life, to act with moderation and to exercise restraint. We still believe in the virtues of dialogue and negotiation. Only dialogue and negotiation can bring a just and lasting peace to the Middle East. We call on the Palestinians and Israelis to demonstrate more courage and a greater sense of history by deciding

resolutely to return to the path of dialogue towards a lasting peace.

Is there any need to point out that a legal framework already exists that could ease tension and lead to a comprehensive settlement? I refer to the relevant resolutions of the Security Council — resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) — which are the bases of the Quartet's road map. We believe that action undertaken in respect for international law would help to bring about a real, just and lasting peace. It is only through a political settlement that the legitimate aspirations of both sides to live in peace, within secure and recognized borders, can actually be realized. Let us therefore give the Quartet's peace plan a chance. It offers a methodical and comprehensive settlement that takes account of the political, security, economic and humanitarian aspects to be addressed in parallel, not in sequence.

History is what men and women make it. It is up to the men and women of Israel and Palestine to write and to make their history together. To that end, as Cameroon has said before and will say again, it is essential for the men, women and young people of the Middle East to launch the process of developing and transforming their ways of thinking and acting so as to stem this mindless tide of violence and to prime the well of love.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are meeting in this Chamber once again to lament and reject the recent escalation of violence in the Middle East. Following a few weeks of relative calm, the enemies of peace have once again achieved their aim. There has been new bloodshed and renewed terrorist acts, leading to scenes of horror. The Israel Defence Forces are again laying siege to the headquarters of President Arafat and imperilling not only his life, but the very possibility of reform in the various components of the Palestinian Authority.

Let there be no doubt that Colombia rejects terrorist attacks in Israeli territory and the recent attack against a school in Palestine. Israel's excessive use of force and the siege of Arafat's headquarters do not contribute to establishing the political climate necessary to overcome the stalemate in a process that began two years ago.

The members of the Security Council have supported the diplomatic activities of the Quartet, of which the United Nations is a participating member. The Quartet's plan, put forward about a week ago, is comprehensive and includes various aspects that will have to be developed in parallel with one another. As we have said previously in this Chamber, the political, security, economic and humanitarian aspects must be addressed simultaneously. While the first phase of the Quartet's plan touches on all these aspects, we must ensure that one will not prevail as a precondition for the others.

The Quartet, with the participation of other States, has also established some working groups to assist the Palestinian Authority in making reforms in various areas. There can be no doubt that acts of violence and terror impede this process, as do actions taken to undermine the Palestinian Authority, which fly in the face of the forces for change supported by the international community.

The elections in Palestine scheduled for early next year will be a decisive moment. The leadership chosen in those elections should enjoy the international community's support, as it will be responsible for implementing the next phase of the plan — the establishment of the Palestinian State.

The establishment of the Palestinian State is not just an option, it is a necessity. It means recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as acknowledged in many United Nations resolutions.

The last phase of the Quartet's plan provides for direct negotiations between the parties with a view to reaching a definitive solution. Both the reforms and the political process must be accompanied by measures implemented by Israel to improve the living standards of the Palestinian people, thereby making it possible for economic activities to resume, facilitating the movement of goods and peoples and lifting blockades and curfews. Both parties must make a great effort to avoid being overwhelmed by the violence, or, rather, not to give way to the extremists who see violence as the only course of action.

A few days ago we received a report from Mrs. Catherine Bertini, the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, assessing the humanitarian situation in the territories. That report is worrying and confirms what we all feared. The lack of mobility is having an impact on the people, as they are unable to get to work. Their health has deteriorated, in addition to the fact that in some emergency situations ambulances have been

denied access. Education has also been affected, as neither teachers nor children can get to the schools. The lack of income is causing a food crisis, and approximately 300 localities have no regular water supply. In the words of the report, there is a serious and growing humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza.

The report contains a series of recommendations that must be taken into account by both the Palestinian Authority and Israel, including the obligation to respect international humanitarian law and the applicability to the occupied territories of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Over the past few days, the efforts of the Quartet to draw up a plan of action leading finally to peace in the Middle East has borne fruit. A time frame was prepared, with a three-phase plan designed to obtain a lasting peace built on the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace within secure borders and with normal, productive working relations with all their neighbours.

The Quartet's efforts also led to the search for a mechanism to implement, monitor and verify agreements to be arrived at on the basis of the three-phase plan. Agreement was reached on considering the idea of setting up a monitoring system, to be carried out by parties from outside the region who could confirm that the commitments entered into by the parties were being implemented.

Under those circumstances, the international community began to feel that the peace effort might bear fruit. Those expectations have been once again thwarted, however, by the violent developments of the past few days. The resumption of suicide attacks and reprisals by Israel are two elements that show clearly the endless vicious cycle. The terrorists who carried out those acts did so with the clear intention of undermining the peace process that could have been under way. But it is also clear that the reprisals carried out by Israel, whatever their objective, also represent an obvious movement backwards and a means to thwart hopes for peace.

Mexico condemns and repudiates the terrorist acts that have claimed Israeli victims in the past few days. Nothing could be more effective in preventing the recurrence of such acts than resolute action by the Palestinian Authority to isolate and neutralize armed groups, such as Hamas, which resort to and glorify terrorism. The Palestinian Authority must dissociate itself, actively and definitively, from terrorism. It must make a genuine and sincere effort to prevent the continuing dissemination of hatred. We should ask ourselves, however, how the Palestinian Authority can do so if it is being subjected, as it clearly is, to constant harassment and destruction.

Time and again my delegation has expressed my country's conviction that reprisals and efforts to destroy the Palestinian Authority simply encourage violence and escalate hatred. Israel should be betting on peace and assuming all the risks of such a wager.

My country appeals to Israel to act in such a way as to help build confidence. This would include facilitating and supporting humanitarian assistance to alleviate tension in the occupied Palestinian territories so that acceptable living conditions could gradually be established there. It is imperative that we face up to the economic and humanitarian situation, which has been deteriorating in an unacceptable manner because of the actions of Israel.

Mexico once again reaffirms its support for the efforts being made by the Quartet. We will be considering the draft resolution that is before Council members with a view to seeking consensus and, indeed, demonstrating the clear will of the Council and reiterating our desire for peace.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): The Council is meeting today to discuss once again the situation in the Middle East following the escalation of the violence in the past few days. We have seen such violence before, but today, if the current situation is not brought under control, we run the risk of completely compromising the peace process, and we even face the possibility of wide-scale conflict.

Mauritius condemns all violence, be it in the form of reprehensible terrorist attacks and suicide bombings or in the form of the unchecked and disproportionate use of military force. Mauritius condemns, in the strongest terms, the continued siege and the systematic destruction of Chairman Arafat's compound in total defiance of resolution 1402 (2002), and we demand an immediate end to the blockade as well as the withdrawal of the Israeli Defence Forces from Ramallah.

We fully understand and support Israel's need to provide security to its people, and we deplore and condemn the attacks on its civilians. What we cannot understand is the unwarranted and unjustified siege on the Palestinian Authority, which still represents the only authority with which any peace agreement can be contemplated. The surgical destruction of the buildings around Chairman Arafat's compound, aimed at isolating and humiliating him, constitutes a serious act of provocation that, in the mildest terms, not only is most unhelpful and will not stop the cycle of violence, but in fact will lead to more uncontrolled violence and more terrorist attacks. Mauritius recognizes Chairman Arafat as the elected and legitimate leader of the Palestinian people; subjugating the latter will only incite hatred and violence and will therefore serve only the motives of the extremist groups.

Mauritius is convinced that Israel's legitimate concerns will be met only through cooperation and dialogue, rather than by destroying the Palestinian Authority. The continued siege on the Palestinian headquarters will also seriously undermine and slow the reform process, the importance of which we all underscore. The need to build a new and efficient Palestinian security capability on a sound basis of unified command, transparency and accountability should be the number-one priority. We call on Israel to review its conduct and strategy in dealing with the Palestinian Authority. Israel must realize that an improvement in the security situation can come about only if the Palestinian security institutions are not undermined and if they are allowed to operate freely and effectively.

A few months before the January elections, it is all the more important that all necessary precautions be taken to create an atmosphere conducive to the organization of those elections, in respect of which we call on all parties to ensure that they are free and fair and that nothing is done that could potentially predetermine their outcome.

As long as we do not address the root cause of the Middle East problem, we will not be able to find a long-term, durable solution. The problem of occupation and the need for the Palestinians to have their own homeland must be seriously considered. While we fully support the vision of the two States living in peace with secure borders, it is imperative that that vision be given some material shape.

In that respect, we support the efforts of the Quartet for a solution to the Middle East crisis based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), as well as the road map outlined at its meeting last week. We equally support the Quartet's vision of a three-phase plan of action for achieving a two-State solution. But we believe that the first priority after the elections of January 2003 should be a declaration of statehood for the Palestinians, with provisional borders. Such a step will be the single most effective confidence-building measure, which, in our view, will go a long way in curbing the violence, as the people of Palestine will thus be given a real ray of hope.

In order to make that happen, however, there must be strong commitments on both sides to achieve those goals. Israel should immediately stop the siege of the Palestinian Authority, withdraw its forces from the occupied areas and return to positions held prior to September 2000. It should also stop the illegal settlements. We call on the Palestinians, on their side, to honour their commitment to renounce violence and terrorist attacks.

The chilling briefing by Mr. Roed-Larsen on the humanitarian situation in the occupied territories last Friday highlighted the need for urgent action by the international community. It is important that we take a fresh look at the recommendations contained in the Bertini report and that we harness all efforts towards the alleviation of the sufferings of the innocent Palestinians. The statistics showing 50 per cent of the population living on food hand-outs, a 50-per-cent unemployment rate, 70-per-cent poverty levels and an acute shortage in the food supply should not go unheeded. We call on the international community to assist the Palestinian people by implementing without delay the recommendations of Ms. Bertini, the Personal Humanitarian Envoy of the Secretary-General. We also call on Israel to lift the restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and to continue releasing funds — collected as tax revenues — that are due to the Palestinians, in order to relieve their economic hardships.

Six weeks of calm in the Middle East has not helped in making any significant headway in the peace process. It proves that a sequential approach is not going to work. Mauritius therefore supports the strategy outlined by the Secretary-General for a parallel approach, rather than a sequential one, to deal

with the Middle East situation in a comprehensive manner. The diplomatic and political process should continue, along with discussions on the security and economic dimensions.

Mauritius believes that the Council must send a clear message to both sides that violence will not help to bring peace; it must be stopped, and negotiations must continue. At a time when so much importance is being given to the need for Members to respect and comply with all Security Council resolutions, it is essential that the centrality and the credibility of the Council be made to be unreservedly and indiscriminately respected by one and all.

Mr. Traoré (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): After a brief period of calm that gave rise to hope for a return to peace in the Middle East, the region, sadly, is again plunging into a cycle of violence. For several days, we have witnessed a resumption of suicide bomb attacks and a disproportionate reaction by the Israeli authorities. Those reprehensible acts, which are contrary to the spirit of international legality, encourage the extremists on both sides and lead to a resurgence of the old demons of intolerance.

It is obvious that the Palestinian groups targeting Israelis are harming the cause of self-determination and the creation of an independent Palestinian State. In the same manner, the prolonged siege on the headquarters of President Arafat and the near-destruction of existing infrastructure are part of a process of weakening the Palestinian Authority, which, under such conditions, cannot meet Israel's security demands.

My delegation vigorously condemns the suicide attacks that are killing innocent Israeli civilians, as well as the continued siege and destruction of Palestinian infrastructure. Such policies serve neither the interests of the Palestinian people nor those of the Israeli people. The only solution for putting an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — and we will never stop repeating it — is the cessation of hostilities and the return to the negotiating table, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Such negotiations must be part of a comprehensive framework that takes account of both the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and of Israel's right to security. They must also take into account, simultaneously and equally, the political, humanitarian and security aspects of the question. To do so — above and beyond the necessary political will of the Israeli and Palestinian leaders — the international community in general and the Security Council in particular must continue their efforts to reach a rapprochement between the two parties. In that context, let me mention the recent meeting of the Quartet, held in New York on 17 September, which laid down a road map that we find reasonable and that we support. That three-phase plan, if followed consistently and implemented with conviction, will be one of the surest ways of restoring confidence and leading the Palestinian and Israeli peoples towards a way of extricating themselves from the crisis, in a way that is honourable, just and lasting.

My delegation does not doubt for a single minute that with the joint efforts of the international community, whose praiseworthy initiatives and commitment are not lacking, we will together attain our objective and contribute to the strengthening of international peace and security.

Mr. Wehbe (Syria) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset, Mr. President, to thank you for convening this meeting of the Security Council, although it was somewhat delayed, since we had requested it on Friday. We do not understand the delay, in view of the fact that the situation in the region is boiling.

All of us have stated our views about the grave danger in the region, noting especially that recent days have witnessed catastrophic developments on the Palestinian scene, developments without precedent since the war crimes of the Second World War. Many of us thought that, especially with the advent of the new millennium, we had seen the last of the deliberate destruction of buildings with their residents — including children, women and old people — still inside and the wide-scale destruction of infrastructure. But that is the reality in the occupied Palestinian territories, where the Israeli occupying forces commit the most heinous and atrocious crimes against Palestinian civilians, without being deterred by any party, and without even the minimum of respect for international law and international humanitarian values. In addition, they have no respect for standards on which the peoples of the world have agreed, as embodied in conventions that have become symbols of human values and civilization.

Israel is armed to the teeth with all kinds of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, which constitute an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction

and murder; in full view, its bulldozers demolish the homes of the children and the dispossessed among the Palestinian people. Israel is pursuing its daily hobby: killing and destruction. This represents the worst kind of defiance and contempt for international legality and ethical norms and values.

We have heard that the Security Council has adopted 28 resolutions on this matter. Israel has paid no heed to those resolutions. Can there be any greater defiance of international legality? If another State had failed to comply with only one resolution, the world would have been up in arms.

Syria has warned over and over again that what is currently taking place in the occupied Arab territories is part of a strategy pursued by the Israeli Government, which has made its defiance of international law and of Council resolutions a regular policy. We have stated before, and we state again here that the Israeli Government has no peace strategy. Its strategy does not require in-depth analysis: it is built on waging wars, perpetuating occupation and suppressing the aspirations of our people in the occupied territories to realize their hope for freedom, dignity and an end to the occupation.

A case in point with regard to the anti-peace Israeli policy is the statement made by the Israeli Prime Minister a few days ago. He said that Arabs have no right to the territories occupied in 1967. He added that Israel has sovereignty over those territories. Do we really need further proof that the Israeli Government does not want peace, that it insists on occupation and that it resorts to military force, which is nothing but a bankrupt policy, as His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan said this morning?

Today the Palestinian people is facing the worst kind of unjust occupation, siege and systematic assassinations, without seeing any serious initiative to put an end to the atrocious modern-day massacre that Israel is committing before the eyes and ears of the world. More than 70 days have gone since the beginning of the monstrous siege of Nablus, without the international community doing anything to save those hundreds of thousands of women, children and other innocent civilians. This applies also to other cities in the territories.

We are talking about the destruction of Palestinian institutions. Israel has killed over 80 Palestinians in a month and a half. It was not asked to put an end to its machine of death and vengeance. No one made a move, even though the world knows that the Israeli pretext of fighting Palestinian violence no longer holds. Does this silence indicate a new international law in progress? One based on condoning war crimes and violations of human rights to satisfy Israel and accommodate the whims of its leaders in shedding more Palestinian blood? Is this a new international law that has replaced existing international law, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions?

The Arabs and the international community agreed on the conditions for the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the principle of land for peace. At the recent Beirut Summit, the Arab leaders adopted a comprehensive peace initiative based on international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. Nonetheless, Israel insists on occupation and daily acts of aggression against the Arabs. Against this background, the Arabs are more determined than ever to uphold their inalienable rights and continue to believe in international legitimacy as the road leading to a just and comprehensive peace.

Before Council members is a draft resolution that the Arab Group has endorsed unanimously. It expresses grave concern over the tragic and violent events engulfing the Palestinian territories since the year 2000, including the re-occupation of the Palestinian Authority's headquarters. The draft resolution reiterates the need to respect international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949. The draft resolution demands that Israel withdraw its forces from the Palestinian cities. Syria supports this draft resolution and believes that it is the lowest common denominator on which Council members can agree. Would our Council then open a window of hope to the Palestinian people who have been living under an unjust siege and unacceptable practices?

This is what we urge the Council to do. We hope that we will be able to open this window of opportunity, and we urge the Council members to support the minimum requirements included in this draft resolution.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): In recent days, violent clashes once again have

exploded between Israel and Palestine. We condemn the fact that the Israeli army once again besieged Ramallah and has destroyed Chairman Arafat's headquarters, thus directly endangering his safety and security.

We demand that the Israeli side put an immediate end to this siege of Chairman Arafat and ensure his dignity, as well as his safety and security. We also condemn the incidence of suicide bombings within Israel. We call on both Israel and Palestine to exercise restraint, stop responding to violence with more violence and collaborate with the mediation efforts of the international community.

During the recent vicious cycle of violence, both Israel and Palestine suffered terrible losses, especially Palestine, where the humanitarian situation has become extremely serious. The Israeli authorities put blind faith in force. However, their excessive, violent retaliation has not obtained peace and security for Israel. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict also demonstrates that to put an end to violence and to promote the peace process in the Middle East, the active participation of international community is indispensable.

Not long ago the Arab League Summit adopted and endorsed a peace proposal for the Middle East put forward by Saudi Arabia. Recently the Quartet put forward a three-phase, three-stage plan. The reform and election in Palestine have also been put on the agenda. All of these developments are positive, but we also see that the vicious cycle of violence between Israel and Palestine has not been broken.

Without an end to violence, the reform in Palestine cannot continue, and all the road maps and programmes for the settlement of the problem between Israel and Palestine will become mere dead letters. Therefore, the international community must exert greater efforts, and the Security Council should shoulder its responsibilities all the more.

The Chinese Government attaches importance to peace and stability in the Middle East and hopes to see an early easing of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. In order further to participate in and promote the peace process in the Middle East, the Chinese Government has already designated a special envoy on the question of the Middle East. We will strengthen contacts and consultations with all parties concerned and make unremitting efforts for the realization of peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The situation around the Palestinian territories continues to deteriorate and is threatening to get out of control. The large-scale terrorist acts in Israel were followed by harsh action by the Israeli army against the residence of the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat, in Ramallah. Now, in response to that, currently there are mass protest demonstrations under way in the Palestinian territories. In clashes with the Israeli troops in Ramallah, Tulkarem and Nablus, there are dead and wounded.

All of this happened at the very moment when a drop in the level of violence in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was being noted. It happened when there were prospects for emerging from the crisis on the basis of the proposals agreed by the Quartet of international mediators in New York on 17 September. Their proposals had been supported by the Security Council.

The extremist forces are not interested in a settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. They want to undermine the situation again and thrust the Palestinians and the Israelis into another spiral of bloodshed and confrontation. It is extremely important not to let the opponents of the peace process achieve their goals. We would strongly urge both sides not to yield to the emotions and provocations of the extremists, not to allow the unfolding of this scenario of violence.

Last weekend the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Igor Ivanov, had telephone conversations with the head of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasser Arafat; Shimon Peres, the Deputy Prime Minister of Israel; Amre Moussa, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; the United States Secretary of State; the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Denmark; the United Nations Secretary-General; and Mr. Javier Solana, the High Representative of the European Union. They exchanged views about what steps should be taken to resolve this crisis.

Russia is convinced that it is now extremely important to do everything possible to achieve an immediate halt to the violence. It is important to end the blockade and the destruction of the headquarters of the head of the Palestinian National Authority, and to

give the Palestinian Authority some real possibility of introducing order into the territory, first of all by halting extremist attacks and arresting persons guilty of terrorist acts.

At this critical moment, it is important to make use of all existing mechanisms to swiftly stabilize the situation. It is necessary to make use of the potential of the Security Council, of international mediators and of key Middle Eastern countries in order to halt this escalation of the conflict and clear the way for negotiations on the basis of what the Quartet has agreed upon, which opens the way to a comprehensive settlement based on the resolutions of the Security Council. Today, those resolutions are not being implemented.

The Security Council must respond to this challenge to its authority. We must actively and firmly seek to achieve an immediate halt to this absolutely unacceptable development of the situation in the Palestinian territories, which is a real threat to peace and security.

Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, will be guided by those principles in considering the draft resolution that will be introduced in the Council.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): When the Secretary-General spoke to us earlier this morning, he ended with this sentence: "Let us rebuild a centre that can hold" (supra). I think he was referring to the rebuilding of a centre in the Middle East, but his remarks might apply to the Security Council as well, which, as we know, has not often been united on the Middle East question. We also need to rebuild a centre within the Security Council.

One practical suggestion we have is that it might be useful to review the many thoughtful statements the Secretary-General has made on the Middle East question, including the one he made today. If we use his statements as a basis for action, then I think we can rebuild the centre we need in this Council.

Speaking now in my national capacity, I note that, as the fourteenth speaker, we will probably repeat or endorse many of the points that have been made so far, but some of them are worth repeating. We will make five points.

The first point is that Singapore deplores in the strongest terms all acts of violence and terror that target civilians, and it calls for an end to extreme acts by both sides. The Israeli forces must stop their frequent military incursions into Palestinian cities and, as virtually every other speaker has said, its siege of Ramallah. At the same time, the Palestinian Authority must undertake resolute efforts to put a stop to the suicide bombings and other acts of terror against the Israeli population. In this regard, we welcome the categorical condemnation by the Palestinian Authority of the recent spate of suicide bombings.

The second point we would like to make is that, like several other speakers, we would like to strongly support the efforts of the Quartet. Indeed, it is hard to believe it was only three days ago that Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen came here and briefed us on the significant progress made by the Quartet.

It is also noteworthy that the latest Quartet meeting included consultations with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Syria, as representatives of the Arab League follow-up committee, as well as representatives of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. At the same time, the Quartet spelled out detailed and specific time lines and targets within the three-phase road map. It is also significant that the Quartet has decided to set up a third-party mechanism to monitor and assess progress in the three phases; the assessments will be strictly based on the parties' compliance with specific performance benchmarks. We look forward to receiving more details as the Quartet develops its monitoring and assessment mechanism.

One point we wanted to make to the Quartet was that we hope that as the Quartet carries out its work it will bear in mind that it must also deliver results, because if the Quartet describes its plan of action without delivering results, our fear is that this process too may be damaged.

Our third point is that we hope the international community, as well as the Quartet, will not be held hostage by the actions of extremists on both sides who are clearly determined to disrupt the peace process. In this difficult moment we should not lose sight of the larger process, which, as Mr. Roed-Larsen pointed out to us, must be based on the parallel pursuit of the various humanitarian, security, political tracks, as well as on reciprocity.

The fourth point we would like to raise relates to the humanitarian dimension, which, as several speakers

have said, is extremely important. Mr. Roed-Larsen gave us statistics on how bad the humanitarian situation is currently. We support immediate relief efforts to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, including implementation of the recommendations made by Ms. Catherine Bertini, the Secretary-General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy. Israel's obligations under international law are clear: it must allow and facilitate immediate access by humanitarian agencies to mount emergency rescue operations in the affected areas.

My fifth and final point is that we continue to believe that the situation demands the continued and sustained engagement of the Security Council. Again, as virtually every speaker has said, the best way of addressing the situation is through implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). Each of those resolutions came about through painful negotiations. Their words were carefully chosen, and we have them before us. Our challenge is to implement them.

Again, as other speakers have said, long term progress depends on the political will of both sides to move beyond short-term security measures to the broad vision set out in resolution 1397 (2002) where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders.

We also believe that the Arab peace initiative adopted at the Beirut Arab Summit offers a historic opportunity that should not be squandered.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Bulgaria supports the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make a few additional comments. Bulgaria stands up indignantly against this new cycle of violence in the Middle East. We unambiguously condemn the acts of terror and violence that have caused the death of innocent civilians and the destruction of homes and other property.

Bulgaria condemns terrorist acts in Israel, in particular those that took place in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. At the same time, we deplore the decision taken by the Israeli Government to isolate President Arafat. These acts are causing a crisis in the Middle East and leading to a new vicious circle whose hostages are both the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. We insist that those acts of violence, including the killing of innocent civilians, cease immediately. Bulgaria appeals to the Palestinian Authority to redouble its efforts to stop all terrorist acts and suicide bombings. They are directed against the national interests of the Palestinian people, the establishment of the Palestinian State and peace. The fight against terrorism and security measures must be aimed at establishing lasting peace, rather than at encouraging another cycle in this conflict.

What the Israeli army is doing in Ramallah and at President Arafat's headquarters is unacceptable. Those acts and policies do not help put an end to terrorism. In fact, they encourage extremists and impede reform of the Palestinian Authority and the establishment of lasting peace in the Middle East. Therefore, we call upon Israel to end the siege immediately. What is important now is to create a true atmosphere of security in the region that could promote direct contacts between the parties. From that standpoint, we are encouraged by information we have received in the past few hours reporting direct contact between Israelis and Palestinians.

Bulgaria welcomes in particular the statement made by Mr. Hani al-Hasan, a member of the Fatah Central Committee, stating that Palestine is seeking peace with Israel and that "the Palestinians seek peaceful coexistence and partnership and are prepared to create mutual security".

We welcome with satisfaction the Fatah pledge to prevent attacks against Israeli civilians and we call on the other Palestinian groups to speak out in favour of that initiative. At the same time, we believe that Fatah's appeal for a strike in Gaza to show solidarity with the besieged does not foster a climate of partnership to help create a climate of security. This is the right time to emphasize the importance Bulgaria attaches to resolving the humanitarian crisis that the Palestinian people are experiencing. We support unreservedly the conclusions reached by Ms. Bertini in her report and consider it a matter of urgency that the right balance be struck between Israel's security requirements, on one hand, and, on the other hand, the need to put an end to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories.

My country calls on both parties to sit down at the negotiating table, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), which envisages

peaceful coexistence between two States, Israel and Palestine.

This morning, the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has rightly spoken of the absence of hope in the Middle East. The absence of hope is real on the Israeli side, where the Israelis feel their security continuously threatened, and on the Palestinian side, where the Palestinians do not see an end to occupation. In that context, the Quartet and its adopted road map, a real peace plan, provides a real hope. Bulgaria supports unreservedly the Quartet's New York statement of 17 September 2002, and we insist that both parties work together to achieve a lasting and peaceful solution before 2005.

I conclude by reiterating my country's appeal for greater political judgement and greater compromise by both sides. We reaffirm our determination to give our full support to all those who seek peace and security in the Middle East.

I now resume my function as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): In a few days, the third year of the intifada of the Palestinian people will begin. This week, the occupied Palestinian territories witnessed an escalation in the brutal violence being perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces. It witnessed the destruction and siege of the headquarters of the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat. That violence, which has gone on for the past six weeks, comes at a time when the Palestinian people, in all their groupings and factions, have exercised self-restraint, hoping to achieve real détente, leading to a quieting of the situation in general, thus opening the way to serious negotiations for the two parties to achieve peace. Everyone has taken note of the Palestinian self-restraint, which has continued for six weeks — not just seven days — despite the ongoing operations and acts of violence and oppression by the Israeli army during that prolonged period.

The world has witnessed the ongoing killing of Palestinian civilians. We have all heard with amazement and anger many statements by Israeli officials, not about peace efforts, ending confrontation and returning to constructive dialogue, but ecstatic repetitions of their visions of the coming full victory over all Palestinians, breaking their will and extinguishing the torch of Palestinian resistance.

Unfortunately, there are trends in Israel that envisage that military action, the use of force, killing, siege, starvation and destruction of the human and economic infrastructures of the Palestinian society will achieve their objective through domination and continuation of the occupation.

However, we would like to tell them very clearly that they will fail. We reject their policies and actions and advise them to learn from the lessons of history and of resistance against occupation and colonialism. This resistance cannot be broken. Violence can only lead to violence.

Here we would like to say clearly to the people of Israel that they cannot overcome the will of the Palestinians to resist occupation, regardless of Israel's military might or equipment or its oppressive policies. On the contrary, Israel's actions will only lead to more pain and suffering for both parties. This state of affairs will continue until Israel recognizes that goodwill, negotiations, a return to trust and an end to the occupation are the key to stability, peace and security.

A hand covered in Palestinian blood has raised the Israeli flag over the headquarters of the Palestinian leader, thereby challenging not only the will of the Palestinian people but that of the international community as a whole and the norms of international law. The Palestinian people will take this flag down.

Egypt, which along with the rest of the international community has condemned all forms of violence against civilians on both sides, cannot but condemn Israel's actions against the headquarters of President Arafat. We call on Israel to put an end to all oppressive practices that harm the Palestinian people and their national leadership.

Security cannot be achieved through arrogant and indiscriminate use of force. True, stable and lasting security can be achieved only through a peace that is based on justice and on respect for the rights of others.

Egypt reiterates that peace between the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples can be achieved only if Israel refrains from acts of aggression and withdraws from the occupied Palestinian territories to the line of 4 June 1967, and if a Palestinian State is established, with East Jerusalem as its capital. This is the path to

peace, security and stability in the Middle East and the path to relations of good-neighbourliness and cooperation.

The international community, represented in the Council, is called on today to shoulder its responsibility to put an end to the tragedy that is tearing apart the Holy Land. It must enforce international humanitarian law and facilitate the return of both sides to the negotiating table. This would help to open the way towards the desired settlement.

One of the basic steps we deem important and necessary is the provision of international protection for the Palestinian people in a manner decided on by the international community.

I wish to make one last, important point, which concerns the manner in which the Council has been dealing with the situation prevailing in the occupied territories and the actions of the occupying Power. In our opinion, the Council has been merely witnessing the events of the past few days, as if this matter did not concern it or as if these events were taking place on another planet. The Council must intervene to remedy the situation and to put an end to the actions of the occupying Power. If it does not, its failure to act will send a dangerous signal to all those who have put their trust in international law and in the role of the United Nations in today's world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I welcome Mr. Reaz Rahman, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): As we speak here this morning, President Arafat is under siege, with Israeli tanks destroying his headquarters and surrounding what remains of them.

It is a matter of grave concern, because the latest Israeli military aggression threatens President Arafat, elected leader of a nation, Nobel Laureate for peace and embodiment of the Palestinian cause.

It is a matter of extreme anxiety, because the policy pursued by Tel Aviv seems to be aimed at destroying not only the physical infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, but also the entire edifice of peace constructed through Oslo and Madrid.

It is outrageous that Israel continues to flout resolutions of the Security Council with virtual impunity. The Geneva Conventions are being wilfully ignored. All norms and mores of international law are being breached.

Israel forced a large percentage of Palestinians out of their homes and confined them to refugee camps or forced them into diaspora. For several decades, the people of Palestine have been subject to massacres, to deportation, to daily humiliation, to systematic persecution.

More than a generation of Palestinians has seen nothing but occupation, bombings, missiles, incursions, demolitions, killings, arrests and humiliation. No other nation on earth has suffered so much for so long.

Today, in a sinister reversal of values, the people of Palestine are criminalized for their resistance, for their struggle for self-determination and for claiming their inalienable right to return to ancestral hearths. Yet the free world was supposed to uphold the principles of the Charter — the values of justice, democracy and international law — that constitute the norms of our civilization.

Suicide bombings are used as pretexts for attacks on the Palestinian Authority. Despite President Arafat's public and unequivocal condemnation of such acts.

The Palestinian Authority cannot be held responsible for these individual actions. Experience has amply demonstrated that the security of Israeli civilians is enhanced neither by retaliation, nor by destroying the Palestinian institutions.

Just the other day, the Quartet issued a communiqué. It reiterates the fundamental principles of a comprehensive settlement. It proposes a calendar. It asks Israel to release its stranglehold of the Palestinian economy. Obviously, the Quartet plan can be executed only if Israel is engaged in the peace process.

Bangladesh welcomed the initiative for an international peace conference. We urged its early convening. To arrest the despair and desperation there must be a process; there must be a prospect in view. We must deny the extremists a reason. We must not allow a void. As we have insisted on earlier occasions, the Security Council should revisit the Secretary-General's proposal for an international force, in favour of which there have been indisputable arguments.

The response must be sought in the root-causes; not by trying to make *la lois des plus forts* prevail. The practice of that law has resulted in wars among nations, bloodshed and denial of all civilized norms. The Security Council should act to prevent imposition of that law.

Resolving the conflict will require courage — courage to recognize the truth and courage to defend it, courage to confront the demand of justice and courage to uphold the principles of this Organization. The path to justice, and to peace, was laid down in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1978). A meaningful beginning could be the implementation of the Security Council's own resolutions, namely, 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002).

The Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has strongly condemned the Israeli attack on the Palestinian Headquarters in Ramallah and has expressed grave concern for the security and safety of President Arafat. She has also said that Israel would be solely responsible should any harm befall the Palestinian leaders.

The Security Council needs to secure Israeli compliance with its resolutions, to have its forces withdraw from Palestinian territories and to end its aggression against the people of Palestine. The Security Council must act. It must act to meet its Charter responsibility. It must act to save the people of Palestine from a perpetual war waged against a people. It must act to preserve its credibility and moral authority.

The President (*spoke in French*): I intend to give the floor to one more speaker before suspending the meeting. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): During the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, speaker after speaker has stressed the need for full and unconditional compliance with Security Council resolutions. The Foreign Ministers of the 115 member States of the Non-Aligned Movement also called on all States to abide by Security Council resolutions. They pointed out that if the Security Council's resolutions are not enforced, the very legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations is threatened. Furthermore, they called for conflict situations to be addressed multilaterally, through the United Nations.

We are meeting here today in response to the Israeli military onslaught on the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah. This is the same Israeli military force that the Security Council ordered to withdraw six months ago. Israel has yet to comply with Security Council resolutions that call for the withdrawal of its forces from Palestinian towns and cities.

The life of President Arafat, the elected leader of the Palestinian people, is under threat. Once again, President Arafat's condemnation of the attacks against Israel, which he regards as both morally unacceptable and counter-productive to the Palestinian cause, has fallen on deaf Israeli government ears. It seems that there is a blind impulse towards violence and vengeance that prevails over the logic of dialogue and peace. More innocent civilians continue to die. We unreservedly condemn the killing of civilians, whether they are Israelis or Palestinians.

The sense of despair, frustration and hopelessness in the Middle East is brought about by the occupation and by the fact that no land has been returned in exchange for peace as required by Security Council resolutions. For too long, Israel has ignored the decisions of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. Israel continues to illegally occupy Palestinian lands, settlements continue to expand at an alarming rate and extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests and the destruction of private Palestinian homes, farms and institutions continue unabated. Israel routinely violates even the most basic provisions of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention and has yet to withdraw its forces as required by Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/11. Israel also continues to illegally occupy Syrian and Lebanese territory and to violate the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The draft resolution being circulated seeks to address the fundamental requirements for the resumption of a meaningful political process that would lead to a comprehensive solution of the Middle East crisis. It is in line with the Arab peace plan and the recommendations of the Quartet. For any lasting peace in the Middle East to take hold, the Israeli military must withdraw immediately to the positions held prior to September 2000 and all acts of violence, including military acts; destruction and terror must cease immediately.

We call on the Security Council to immediately adopt this resolution. As the Non-Aligned Movement Ministers made clear, the Security Council must ensure the implementation of all its resolutions. Otherwise, its credibility will be undermined.

The President (*spoke in French*): The brevity of the statement by the representative of South Africa allows me to give the floor to two further representatives. The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Jordan, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month and wish you every success in your presidency. I must also extend my thanks to your predecessor, Mr. John Negroponte, the Ambassador of the United States, for his efforts during his presidency of the Council last month.

It is regrettable that we are meeting to discuss once again the Israeli practices against the Palestinian Authority and people, which have been continuing since our last meeting in July 2002. Israel is still attempting to subjugate the Palestinian Authority and has been practising all forms of violence against the Palestinian people, arbitrary sieges, closures and curfews, ever since it reoccupied the Palestinian territories in September 2000.

We support and welcome the progress that has been achieved during the past few weeks, particularly the Gaza-Bethlehem agreement, and we viewed with great hope the calm that prevailed while international efforts were made to bring the peace process back to its right track. We call on all parties to commit themselves to the results of the last meeting of the Quartet, held in New York a few days ago, which resulted in a plan of action and a timetable to realize the American vision of establishing two States living side by side in peace with an independent Palestinian State established within the borders of 4 June 1967, and to put an end to the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab territories. At the same time, we strongly condemn all acts by Israel to undermine the political process and to escalate the situation, particularly the recent military acts against the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority and president Yasser Arafat. I would also like to reiterate my country's position of condemning all forms of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians, which are used as a pretext by certain groups to hinder international efforts to revive the peace process. We believe that those acts are perpetrated not only against Israeli civilians but against all the peoples of the region who wish to live in security and who want a comprehensive and just peace.

We would also like to reiterate that Israel's practices and its siege of the Palestinian Authority have weakened the Palestinian side's ability to shoulder its responsibilities. We therefore call upon all the parties concerned to enable the Palestinian Authority to rebuild its security institutions in order to carry out its duties.

We call on all parties concerned to bring calm to the situation, to exercise self-restraint and to shoulder their responsibilities to support the efforts made by the Quartet and the brotherly Arab countries to bring the peace process back to its right track, based on the Madrid terms of reference, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the Arab peace initiative.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Turkey, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Pamir (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the Security Council in a fairly critical period and, as the representative of our neighbour and close friend, Bulgaria, we wish you every success in your efforts. Our warm thanks also go to Ambassador Negroponte, the representative of the United States, which held the presidency of the Council during the month of August.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. Likewise, we fully subscribe to the eloquent speech delivered this morning by Mr. Kofi Annan. The wisdom of his words should inspire us all.

We are gathered here today after a six-week period of relative calm in Israel, which was undermined by the two brutal suicide attacks of last week on Israelis in Umm el-Fahm and Tel Aviv and by the bomb planted at a Palestinian school in Hebron. We extend our deepest condolences to the bereaved families of the victims. We are dismayed to see that the tension in the Middle East grows and the situation in

the Palestinian territories deteriorates as the siege in and around the compound of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, continues. All these remind us of the desperate days of the vicious cycle of violence.

Turkey strongly and unequivocally condemns all acts of terror and violence. We reiterate our firm stance that there is no justification for any such actions under any pretext. Terror and violence lead nations to darkness and misery and only help kill the hopes of their future generations. Fighting terrorism is not only a sovereign right of States but also a moral obligation incumbent upon each and every member of the international community. In this respect, we welcome the call of President Arafat to the Palestinian people and to all other parties to halt any violent attacks inside Israel.

Turkey deeply regrets the morally repugnant suicide attacks targeting civilians and deplores that Israel has once again used harsh military measures in the Palestinian cities, in particular in Ramallah. We are gravely concerned at the Israeli actions in and around the Muqata'a, the headquarters of President Arafat, who is the elected leader of the Palestinian people. Here, we call upon the Israeli Government to put an immediate end to reoccupation. We urge the Israeli Government to stop destruction in the Palestinian cities, which serves only to aggravate the dire and strained humanitarian conditions of the civilian Palestinian population. Indeed, a more forthcoming attitude from Israel towards its Palestinian counterparts would brighten political prospects.

In this vein, we call upon the leadership of Israel to think over the possible consequences that isolating Mr. Arafat might have on the ongoing Palestinian reforms in particular, and the fragile peace process, in general.

The rise in tensions amid the siege, suicide bombings and street protests have further damaged hopes of ending two years of violence, which has taken a heavy toll on innocent lives, most of them Palestinians. We wish to hope that the opponents of durable peace in the Middle East will not be given another opportunity to undermine the intensified efforts of the international community towards achieving a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the common vision of two States, Israel and an independent, viable and democratic Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

Turkey supports all efforts, including those of the Quartet, towards this end and as a regional facilitator is ready to provide its assistance in whatever way may be necessary. Finally, we wish to encourage all parties to assume their responsibilities to seek a just and comprehensive settlement of the conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), along with the Madrid terms of reference, the principle of land for peace and the implementation of all existing agreements between the parties.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Turkey for his kind words addressed to me.

The meeting was suspended at 1.15 p.m.